

# *Alpinia caerulea* (R.Br.) Benth.

## Family:

Zingiberaceae

Bentham, G. (1873) *Flora Australiensis* 6: 265.

## Common name:

Common Ginger; Ginger, Common; Ginger, Native; Native Ginger

## Stem

Usually flowers and fruits as a shrubby plant about 1-2 m tall, occasionally taller, but it should be noted that only the leaves are above ground level. The true stem is below the soil surface.

## Leaves

Leaf blades shortly petiolate or sessile, leaf blades to about 40 x 3.5-10 cm, ligule up to 1.5 cm long, entire or shallowly emarginate.

## Flowers

Inflorescence terminal, usually shortly pubescent. Bracts narrowly lanceolate, 15-20 mm long each subtending a group of 4-6 flowers. Bracteoles about 5-15 mm long, pedicels 10-20 mm long. Calyx about 10 mm long. Corolla tube about 12 mm long, lobes about 5-8 mm long. Labellum orbicular, shortly clawed, shortly bilobed, about 10 mm diam. Anther about 2-3 mm long, crest entire, about 1-2 mm long, filament about 2-3 mm long, wider than the anther. Ovary up to 6 mm long, usually pubescent, style about 11 mm long.

## Fruit

Capsules glabrous, globular, tardily dehiscent, about 10-15 mm diam. Seeds numerous, aril thin and +/- translucent.

## Seedlings

One cataphyll produced before the first true leaf. First true leaf glabrous, cordate or ovate, about 15-20 mm long, petiole as long as or longer than the leaf blade. Second leaf narrower. At the tenth leaf stage: leaves 2-ranked, leaf blade linear-lanceolate, about 15-16 x 3.5-4 cm, petiolate, apex acuminate, base obtuse, glabrous. Lateral veins closely spaced, parallel and departing from the midrib at a low angle, about 10 degrees. Sheathing leaf base glabrous, ligule bilobed, mainly glabrous except for the upper margin. Terminal bud rolled resembling the stipule of a fig or the terminal bud of *Geijera*. Seed germination time 30 to 232 days.

## Distribution and Ecology

Endemic to Australia, occurs in CYP, NEQ, CEQ and southwards as far as coastal central New South Wales. Altitudinal range in CYP and NEQ from near sea level to 1400 m. Grows in disturbed areas in well developed lowland, upland and mountain rain forest.

## Natural History & Notes

Food plant for the larval stages of the Banded Demon Butterfly. Common & Waterhouse (1981).

Fruit eaten by Cassowaries. Cooper & Cooper (1994).

A widespread species commonly cultivated in gardens. The large upright stems with basal leaves can be a feature. White flowers are followed by blue fruits.

## Synonyms

*Alpinia caerulea* (R.Br.) Benth. var. *caerulea*, *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Queensland* 11: 18(1895). *Hellenia caerulea* R.Br., *Prodromus Florae Novae Hollandiae* : 308(1810), Type: NSW, Hunter River, R. Brown; syn: BM; Queensland, Northumberland Is., R. Brown; syn: BRI.

## RFK Code

3287



Flower. © Barry Jago



Leaves and fruit. © CSIRO



Leaves and Flowers. © CSIRO



Fruit, side views and dehiscent fruits. © W. T. Cooper



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



Cotyledon and 1st leaf stage, hypogeal germination. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



Cotyledon and 1st leaf stage, hypogeal germination. © CSIRO

